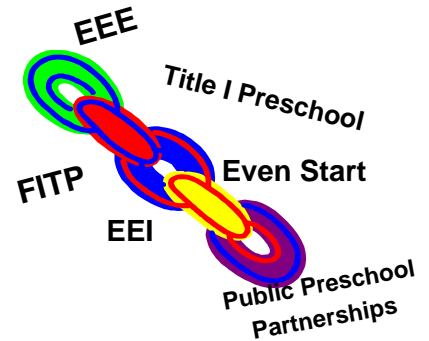


Early Ed Links



August 2006 Volume 1, Issue 2

Linking Together for Children and Families

One of the key ingredients for being an effective educator is to stay informed and communicate often with colleagues around the state. It is our intention that Early Ed Links will help serve this purpose. This Department of Education (DOE) quarterly newsletter will feature program updates, a calendar of events, and resources on best practices in early education, early intervention, and prevention.

The DOE is involved with early education through a variety of programs:

- Early Education Initiative for at-risk preschoolers
- Essential Early Education for preschoolers with special needs
- Even Start for families with low literacy skills and/or living in poverty
- Family Infant Toddler Program for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families
- Title I preschool programs in schools and for migrant or homeless children.
- Public preschool partnerships using funds from the Education Fund to support early education programs in schools or other community-based settings

Early Ed Links is your newsletter - we seek your contributions as Vermont strives to provide high-quality and effective services for all children.

If you have comments, contributions or ideas for Early Ed Links, please contact Kate Rogers at katerogers@education.state.vt.us

Legislative Update Corner

Act 186, a bill pertaining to early education services in Vermont, was passed by the Vermont legislature this past May. Act 186 creates a summer study committee to examine a variety of issues related to public funding of early care, health and education. The committee's report and recommendations will be delivered to the Legislature next January for consideration and possible action. In the meantime, the State Board of Education will not make any modifications or additions to existing rules pertaining to early education, and communities may continue to explore opportunities to offer early education services.

Early Education Initiative

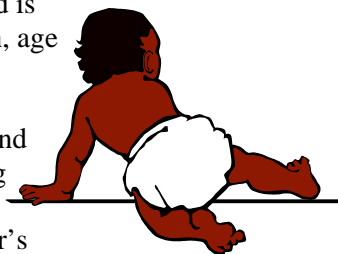
EEI continues to be an important program in Vermont as it targets at-risk preschoolers who would otherwise "fall between the cracks" of services and likely enter kindergarten not fully prepared for a successful learning experience. During 2005-06, 1104 children were served throughout the state in public preschools, Head Start, child care centers, Parent Child Centers, community playgroups or home visiting programs. Over 40% of the programs where children attended have received national accreditation as high quality programs. Nearly 300 children were identified as eligible in these communities but unable to receive services due to program limitations. Of the children participating, nearly 60% were developmentally delayed, 45% lived in poverty, 15% were at risk of abuse or neglect, and 4% were English Language Learners. Despite the challenges, these young learners face, 65% demonstrated positive gains in their overall development. This provides evidence that early education in Vermont certainly works for its at-risk population of preschoolers. Funding for EEI remains level for FY07; as a consequence of inflation, this funding actually represents a 7% decrease from EEI funding levels in 1992.

English Language Learners (ELL)

by Katy Cahill,
FITP Program Associate

Internationally Adopted Children: A Conversation with Karen

Karen and I sat down recently to discuss internationally adopted children as English Language Learners (ELL) and some of the effects their early months or years can have on the learning of English. Karen works for FITP and is the mother to two children, Benjamin, age 4, and Mira, age 9 months who were adopted from Guatemala. Karen's experiences with helping Benjamin and Mira develop language and observing Benjamin's progress while in FITP and EEE have given her a true insider's perspective on internationally adopted children as ELL.



Benjamin came home to Vermont the week of his first birthday. Benjamin lived with a foster family in Guatemala who gave him lots of love and carried him much of the time, as is typical in Guatemala. Due to this practice, Benjamin had not had the opportunities he needed to master gross motor skills such as sitting up or crawling. However, within a short time of his homecoming, he was functioning similarly to same-aged, typically developing peers with respect to physical and motor development, and was forming strong and secure attachments to his adoptive parents. Throughout his first year at home, Benjamin experienced a language-rich environment and excelled in exploring and learning about his new surroundings. However, at the age of two-years old, his expressive language was noticeably delayed.

Benjamin's parents contacted FITP and Benjamin began receiving speech and language services. It was eventually discovered that Benjamin also had some hearing loss due to prolonged accumulation of fluid in his ears. Benjamin's language delay was addressed in a holistic way, and involved all of his caregivers. His hearing problem was ameliorated with ear tubes. Thereafter, Benjamin made great strides in learning English and using expressive language.

Mira came home at 4 months of age, and Karen thinks it is likely that her transition from a Spanish-speaking to an English-speaking environment at such an early age will not affect her language development and acquisition of English.

Karen explained that, in addition to age at adoption, many aspects of children's pre-adoptive environments can impact internationally adopted ELL. Internationally adopted children in Vermont come from a variety of birth countries, including Guatemala, Korea, China, countries in Eastern Europe, and others. The conditions in which children who are available for adoption are raised in their birth countries vary widely. Some children live in foster homes, some live in orphanages or other institutions, and others spend some time in each type of setting. The degree to which children's pre-adoptive environments support and enrich their development also varies widely between and within birth countries.

Finally, adoption means the promise of a permanent, loving family for children, but it also means the loss of their first caregivers, culture, and language. The transition to a new environment with different tastes, smells, and sounds is profound. For children whose receptive or expressive language was becoming sophisticated in their birth country, adoption may precipitate the loss of their primary means of communication. Children react to this transition in unique ways, and some children will need a lot of support in the early phases of acquiring English.

Karen, other FITP staff, and I have discussed what the role of early intervention and related services might be for internationally adopted ELL. We believe that all children and families should have access to the services that they need. Each child and family's situation should be assessed individually, including in cases where the child has been internationally adopted. Many internationally adopted children will develop language and acquire English similarly to their peers from English-speaking families, in particular if they are adopted early into families that provide enriched language environments. On the other hand, some internationally adopted children experience observable and measurable language delays.

Cont'd on page 5

Little Feet, Big Steps

*A series on building the bridge for families
between Family Infant and Toddler Program
(FITP) and*

Essential Early Education (EEE)

*By Lianne Petrocelli
FITP Program Assistant*

*Our moral responsibility is not to stop the future but
to shape it . . . to channel our destiny in humane
directions and to ease the trauma of transition. -
Alvin Toffler*

Transition planning from the Family, Infant and Toddler Program (FITP) to Essential Early Education (EEE) brings both excitement and anxiety. It is a time to celebrate new opportunities, yet also a time in which families and their children experience a range of complex emotions. This is the first of a series of articles on transitioning from FITP to EEE. In this first article we will take a look at a framework for understanding the psychology of transition.

William Bridges, a consultant to the business field and an expert in the area of transition, says it is important to remember that transition is an *ongoing psychological process*. A variety of emotions accompany any transition. Each child and family's situation is unique and there is no one formula that fits all. In his book *Managing Transitions* (2003), Bridges says, "It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions. . . *Change* is situational. . . *Transition*, on the other hand, is psychological; it is a three-phase process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about" (p.3).

The first phase of transition, Bridges explains, starts with accepting that *transitions begin with letting go of something*. Perhaps, it is a time when the leaves fall from a tree in the fall. In the case of transitioning from FITP to EEE, it is the "letting go" of the current, familiar team of service providers, coordinators, and teachers. This can be very emotional for parents and children. Helping families identify and prepare for these changes in a timely way is crucial in this stage.

The second phase Bridges calls *the neutral zone*. He explains this as a time of limbo, a gap between the old reality and the new one. "It is the winter in which the roots begin to prepare themselves for spring's renewal" (Bridges, p.9). This is a time when people may feel overwhelmed and want to retreat from the situation, but it is a crucial time of

reformation and revitalization. In an attempt to make sense of the change, families may ask many questions in this phase such as: What services will my child be receiving? Who will be delivering services? What will be different?

Finally, the *new beginning* phase emerges only after the first two phases happen. It is a time of identifying new relationships and new connections. Children and families begin to make sense of their new situation and start to feel comfortable with the change. It is important to nurture these new relationships as if you were caring for a garden in the spring.

This brief description of the psychological process of transition may help parents understand and identify with their own emotional state as well as their child's and may also help providers understand what families may be experiencing during this time of change.

References:

Bridges, William (1991). *Managing Transitions: Making the most of change*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Vermont Parent Information Center Transition Workshops

In an effort to improve the transition from early intervention services to preschool and kindergarten, the Vermont Parent Information Center, in cooperation with the Department of Education, Essential Early Education, and the Vermont Family, Infant and Toddler Program, has developed two transition workshops for parents of young children and the service providers who work with them. One workshop, Stepping Stones, focuses on the transition from FITP services to EEE or other preschool services. The second workshop, Moving On Up, addresses the transition from EEE to a public school kindergarten setting.

Stepping Stones will be offered in the fall in several communities. VPIC, in collaboration with EEE and Dept of Ed, will be Piloting Moving On Up this year. If you are interested in having a training in your area, please contact Vermont Parent Information Center at 876-5315.



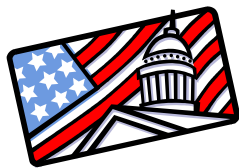
IDEIA 2004 Part C to Part B

Transition Side by Side

For your information! Please review the following Part C to Part B Transition Side by Side. To ensure a smooth and effective transition for children turning three years old both FITP and LEA responsibilities as required under IDEIA or Vermont Regulations are listed for your convenience.

FITP Roles/Responsibilities	LEA Roles/Responsibilities
<p>(i) Pursuant to 303.344 (h) (2) <u>IFSPs developed will include transition steps and supports.</u></p> <p>(ii) <u>Notification to LEA, if child potentially eligible for Part B-- The IFSP service coordinator shall provide written notification to the LEA where the child resides at least 6 months prior to the child's third birthday.</u> It is recommended that LEAs be notified about children identified with a high level of intensive needs at least one year prior to the child's third birthday.</p> <p>(iii) With the approval of the family, a transition conference is convened among host agency, LEA, family, and other related service personnel. The transition conference must occur <u>not less than 90 days or (at the discretion of the parties) not more than 9 months before the child's third birthday and is eligible for Part B services.</u> For children with a high level of intensive needs, it is recommended that the team consider convening a transition conference no less than 9 months prior to the child's third birthday.</p> <p>(iv) With the approval of the family of a child who may not be eligible for preschool services, make reasonable efforts to convene a conference among the lead agency, the family and providers of other appropriate services for children who are not eligible for preschool services under Part B.</p> <p>(v) A comprehensive transition plan is developed by transition team that details necessary steps to enable the child to receive Part B Preschool Special Education Services (Essential Early Education services) or other preschool services as of the child's third birthday.</p> <p>(vi) Given parental consent, host agencies will transfer child's records to LEA to ensure continuity of service i.e., IFSPs, evaluations, assessments, etc. prior to or by the child's third birthday.</p>	<p>(i) Potential placement options for early childhood settings where special education and/or related services should be provided to local host agencies routinely or when changes occur.</p> <p>(ii) The <u>LEA shall participate in the transition planning meetings</u> held by Part C before the child is three.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Written notification provided to parents</u> regarding IEP meeting shall occur early enough to ensure that parents will have an opportunity to attend at a mutually agreed upon time and place. (Form 1a).</p> <p>(iv) <u>The school district shall ensure that an IEP for the child transitioning from FITP to EEE has been developed and is being implemented by the child's third birthday.</u></p> <p>(v) Pursuant to VT Special Education Rule 2363.8, all components of an IEP, shall be included in the transition plan.</p> <p>(vi) In order to provide a smooth and effective transition, it is recommended that school district personnel have ample opportunity to develop a relationship with incoming child and family 90 days to 6 months prior to the child's third birthday. i.e., EEE visits to home, childcare, early intervention programs as well as inviting families to visit EEE program offerings.</p> <p>(vii) <u>LEA must obtain written consent from parents for child's placement into EEE . (Form 6)</u></p> <p>(viii) <u>LEA must acquire written consent from parents for initial provision of special education and related services. (Form 6)</u></p> <p>(ix) If a child turns three during the summer months, their IEP shall be written shortly before the end of the school year or in the summer, so that the IEP can be ready for full implementation at the start of the school year, or by no later than the child's third birthday.</p> <p>(x) A description of any extended school year services (ESY) which the IEP team finds are necessary to provide a FAPE to the child. VT Special Education Rule 2363.8 (h)</p>

Final Part B Regulations IDEA 2004



Finally, the Part B regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) was published in the Federal Register on August 14th, 2006. Here are *some* of the new requirements for IEPs and the IEP process. IEPs

must contain a statement of the child's present levels of *academic achievement* (replaces present levels of performance) and functional performance, **or** for preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities. [34 CFR 300.320 (a) (1)] The basic IEP process and timelines are the same for preschool, elementary and secondary school levels. However, reauthorization added some new provisions to focus on a smooth transition from Part C to Part B (FITP to EEE). If a child was previously served under FITP the LEA, at the parent's request, must invite the FITP service coordinator or another representative to the child's initial EEE IEP meeting to assist with the smooth transition of services. The law also now requires the IEP team to consider a child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) plan of services when developing a child's initial IEP. Under the old version of the law, this was permitted but not specifically required. This change is not intended to obligate LEAs to provide services that are not required under Part B of the act, but it does encourage the LEA to continue relevant services in a manner that will help ease the transition for the child from one program to the other. The new law added changes designed to streamline the IEP process to give parents more control and make the process more efficient. A member of the IEP team is no longer required to attend an IEP meeting if the parent and LEA agree that the member's attendance is unnecessary because that member's area of curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed. A team member will be excused from an IEP meeting despite the member's area of curriculum or related service being modified or discussed as long as the excused team member submits their input in writing prior to the meeting. You must complete VT DOE Special Education Form 5a.

New EEE/FITP Information and Updates

§ Final Part B Regulations of the IDEA 2004

On August 14th 2006, the official copy of the final Part B regulations of the IDEA was published in the Federal Register. To view or download a full version please go to www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html

§ New VT Special Education Regulations as of August 24th

To view or download a version please go to www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_sped.html

§ VT Special Education Regulations Training

Tuesday September 12th 8:30 to 3:30
Eastside Inn, Newport, VT

Wednesday September 13th 8:30 to 3:30
Holiday Inn, Rutland, VT

Call Sabine at 828-0183 to register.

§ EEE Advisory Group Fall Meeting

Monday September 18th from 1pm to 4pm
DOE 120 State St. Montpelier
5th Floor conference room

§ FITP Early Childhood Outcomes Summary form: Practice Session

Friday September 8th from 1 pm- 4 pm
Birth to 3 Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO)
Vermont Interactive Television (VIT) sites

Friday September 15th from 9 am- 4 pm
Birth to 3 Early Childhood Outcomes
Elks Lodge, Montpelier

For more information contact Suzanne Snyder
802-656-4096 or www.suzanne.snyder@uvm.edu

§ Regional EEE Coordinators Meeting (choose one of the following meetings to attend)

November 6th from 8:30 to 3:30
Southern part of state at the
Cortina Inn, Mendon

November 13th from 8:30 to 3:30
Northern part of state at the
Capitol Plaza, Montpelier

For more information contact Shirley at 828-5128

§ AHS & DOE Part C Interagency Agreement

TBD In collaboration with AHS, the DOE will provide technical assistance and support to regional FITP host agencies and supervisory unions in the development of regional plans. These regional plans will define the host agency and district **Child Find** responsibilities.

ELL continued from page 2

Therefore, children should not be found eligible for FITP services based solely on the basis of their status as internationally adopted children, but any child who is referred to FITP should have an multi-domain assessment and be provided services for which he or she may be eligible.



Early Education Team
Division of Life Long Learning
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

The
Mailing
Address
Goes
Here



Early Ed Team Contacts



Professional Development

At the Dept of Education:

- § Manuela Fonseca
828-3850 manuefonseca@education.state.vt.us
- § Jim Squires
828-3892 jimsquires@education.state.vt.us
- § Kate Rogers
828-5115 katerogers@education.state.vt.us
- § Wendy Ross
828-5148 wendyross@education.state.vt.us

At the Family Infant Toddler Program:

- § Helen Keith
241-3622 hkeith@vdh.state.vt.us
- § Jane Ross-Allen
656-1150 jane.ross-allen@uvm.edu

Higher Ed Early Ed Collaborative Course Schedule for Fall

Note: Both of these courses are 3-credit graduate courses offered through UVM.
For more information contact Manuela Fonseca at 802-828-3850

Assessment in Early Intervention/Early Childhood
Special Education—Susan Maude, Ph.D
Classes in Waterbury: 9/23, 10/14, 10/28, 11/17, 12/09

Early Learning Environments and Math Curriculum
Loree Sivis and Sherry Carlson
Section 1—Waterbury 9/22, 10/07, 10/28, 11/11, 12/9
Section 2—Wilder 9/23, 10/07, 11/04, 11/18, 12/9

Early Childhood Prof. Dev. Opportunities for Fall

10/19/06-10/22-/06 *Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Conference*
Young Children with Special Needs and their Families
Little Rock Statehouse Convention Center Little Rock, AK
www.dec-sped.org/conference_05/about_the_conference.html

10/20/06-10/21/06 *VAEYC Conference*
Tracks: Autism, Transition to K, English
Language Learners and more!

11/02/06 *Early Childhood Mental Health Conference*
Featuring Michael Trout
Fee: \$100 by 09/22 or \$125 after 09/22
Call 802-476-1480 to register

11/10/06 -11/12/06 *ICDL Conference*
“Raising the Ceiling for Children with Autism and Disorders
of Relating and Communicating”
Featuring T. Berry Brazelton, MD., Stanley Greenpan, MD